

In the Claims

Please substitute the following claims 1 and 5 for claims 1 and 5 now pending in the above-identified application.

Please cancel claims 4 and 7-10 without prejudice to the filing of future continuing applications.

1. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ An isolated protein which comprises an amino acid sequence ~~identical or substantially identical with the amino acid sequence~~ represented by SEQ ID NO: 1, ~~SEQ ID NO: 2 or SEQ ID NO: 3~~, or a salt thereof.

2. (Original) A partial peptide of the protein of Claim 1, or a salt thereof.

3. (Original) A method for producing the protein of Claim 1 or the partial peptide of Claim 2, or a salt thereof, which comprises culturing a transformant transformed with a recombinant vector comprising DNA encoding for the protein of Claim 1 or the partial peptide of Claim 2 and forming the protein or the partial peptide.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) A method of screening ~~for~~ a compound or a salt thereof ~~promoting or inhibiting the activity of the protein of Claim 1 or the partial peptide of Claim 2, or a salt thereof~~, which comprises administering said compound to a non-human mammal deficient in said protein of claim 1 or salt thereof and then observing and measuring a change in said mammal ~~use of the protein of Claim 1 or the partial peptide of Claim 2, or a salt thereof~~.

6. (Original) A kit for screening for a compound or a salt thereof promoting or inhibiting the activity of the protein of Claim 1 or the partial peptide of Claim 2, or a salt thereof, which comprises the protein of Claim 1 or the partial peptide of Claim 2, or a salt thereof.

Claims 7 - 10 (Cancelled)